

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-19. (Canceled)

20. (New) A service utilization ID number settlement system for the provision of services based on an amount of money paid in advance by a user, and comprising:

a settlement terminal device, configured so as to read, at the time of settlement for prescribed media, an ID number recorded on the media to cause the input of balance information equivalent to the amount of money paid in association with the ID number, and to transmit said ID number in association with said balance information;

one or more settlement authentication devices, configured so as to store ID numbers transmitted from a settlement management device in association with said balance information; when there is a request for service from an information terminal device operated by a user, to judge whether service can be provided, referring to said ID number and balance information, and,

when it is judged that service can be provided, to permit provision of service to said information terminal device, and to subtract from the balance information an amount of money equivalent to the service amount;

wherein the settlement terminal device is configured to input service specification information specifying a service in association with the ID number, and to transmit said ID number in association the service specification information; and

wherein the system further comprises said settlement management device, configured so as to reference said service specification information when an ID number is transmitted from said settlement terminal device, and to transmit the ID number and balance information to a settlement authentication device associated with the service specified by the service specification information.

21. (New) The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 20, wherein:

said settlement terminal device reads, at the time of settlement for the media, the ID number recorded on said media, causes the input of service specification information specifying one or more service and individual balance information equivalent to amounts of money allocated to each service specified from the paid amount, and transmits to said settlement management device the ID number in

association with said service specification information and said individual balance information;

when an ID number is transmitted from said settlement terminal device, said settlement management device references the service specification information transmitted together with the ID number, and transmits, to each settlement authentication device associated with the one or more services specified by the service specification information, the ID number and individual balance information associated with the service specification information; and,

each of said settlement authentication devices is configured to be able to store an ID number transmitted from said settlement management device in association with said individual balance information.

22. (New) A service utilization ID number settlement according to claim 20, wherein

the settlement management device is configured to validate the ID number when an ID number and balance information are transmitted from said settlement terminal device and to store the ID number in association with the balance information, and, when there is a query from any settlement authentication device as to whether a specific ID number is validated, the settlement management device is configured to judge as to whether said ID number is validated, and to transmit the result together with the associated balance information; and,

wherein the one or more settlement authentication devices are configured to store sub-ID numbers in association with balance information; to judge, when there is a request for service together with a specific ID number from an information terminal device operated by a user, as to whether service can be provided according to whether the specific ID number matches said sub-ID number or an ID number stored in said settlement management device; and, to generate a new sub-ID number when the specific ID number does not match a sub-ID number.

23. (Original) A service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 20, further comprising a service selection device, configured so as to receive an ID number as well as service specification from an information terminal device operated by a user, and to transmit service specification information specifying the service together with individual balance information allocated to the service;

wherein the settlement management device is configured to transmit when an ID number has been transmitted from said settlement terminal device and in addition thereto said service specification information and individual balance information have been transmitted from said service selection device, individual balance information and the ID number corresponding to service specification information to each of the settlement authentication devices corresponding to the one or more services specified by the service specification information; and,

wherein the one or more settlement authentication devices are configured to store ID numbers transmitted from said settlement management device in association with said individual balance information; to judge, when there is a request for service from an information terminal device operated by a user, as to whether service can be provided, referring to said ID number and individual balance information; and when it is judged that service can be provided, to permit provision of service to said information terminal device, and to subtract from said individual balance information an amount of money equivalent to the service amount.

24. (New) The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 20 wherein, when judging whether said service can be provided, if the ID number has not been validated, or the amount of money equivalent to the service amount to be provided is smaller than the current balance, said settlement authentication device prohibits the provision of the service.

25. (New) The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 24, wherein:

 said one or more settlement authentication devices are configured to store user-specific information identifying the user associated with said ID number; when a new ID number is issued, the user-specific information associated with the new ID number is referenced, a judgment is made as to whether there exists an

ID number already registered for the same user, and if there exists an ID number already registered, the new ID number is associated with the already-registered ID number and stored, and the new ID number is validated; and,

when a judgment is made as to whether said service can be provided, if the amount of money equivalent to the service amount to be provided is larger than the sum of the balance associated with the already-registered ID number and the balance associated with the new ID number, provision of the service is prohibited.

26. (New) The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 24, wherein:

said one or more settlement authentication devices are configured to store user-specific information identifying the user associated with said ID number; and,

when a new ID number is issued, the user-specific information associated with the new ID number is referenced, a judgment is made as to whether there exists an ID number already registered for the same user, and if there exists an ID number already registered, the balance associated with the already-registered ID number is added to the balance associated with the new ID number, the new ID number is validated, and the balance information associated with the already-registered ID number is deleted.

27. (New) The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 26, wherein said media is supplied in the form of a plurality of separable sheets, bearing different ID numbers.

28. (New) The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 20 wherein, when judging whether said service can be provided, if the current balance less the amount of money equivalent to the service amount to be provided is smaller than a reference amount of money, said one or more settlement authentication devices cause the transmission of warning information to said information terminal device.

29. (New) The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 20, wherein:

 said media is a slip on which are recorded said ID number and other information, and which specifies the amount of money to be paid by the user; and
 the settlement terminal device can input the ID number recorded on the slip and other information, and can transmit the input ID number and other information, and the fact that the user has paid said amount of money.

30. (New) The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 29, wherein said slip is supplied in the form of a plurality of slips on a single sheet, bearing different ID numbers, and which can be cut away.

31. (New) The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 22, wherein the ID number used in said one or more settlement authentication devices are a sub-ID number generated in association with each service.

32. (New) The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 20 wherein said ID number is different for each of said media units.

33. (New) The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 20 wherein:

the settlement terminal device can transmit user deposit information,
and

when said deposit information is received together with an ID number,
the one or more settlement authentication devices set the result of addition of the
deposit information to the balance information as the new balance information.

34. (New) The service utilization ID number settlement system according to any of claims 20, wherein said media comprises an online slip.

35. (New) The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 34, wherein the online slip is printed from an information terminal device.

36. (New) The service utilization ID number settlement system according to any of claims 20, wherein the media comprises an information terminal adapted to display the ID number.